(b) The Government of NCT of Delhi had suggested the establishment of National Food Safety Council under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The proposal is under examination by the Ministry of Health.

Export of Onions

*66. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to lift ban on the export of onion;

(b) if so, whether Government have ensured the stock of onion for domestic consumption; and

(c) what is the storage capacity and the stock available with Government?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) and (b) The ban on export of onion was partially lifted on 21.1.99 by allowing export of Bangalore Rose onion and Krishnapuram onion as well as export of 3000 MTs of onion to Sri Lanka on a Government to Government basis. Subsequently, Government on 9.2.99 decided to permit the export of 25,000 MTs of onion per month for the next three months through the agencies to be designated by the Government of Maharashtra or by the Associate Shippers registered with the designated agencies. The lifting of ban on export of onion, subject to a quantitative ceiling, is to ensure that onion growers get remunerative prices for their produce and also to prevent export of large quantities, so as to keep the prices and availability at resonable levels in the country.

(c) Onion, being a perishable commodity, is not generally stored in cold storages due to its low humidity requirement and pungent smell. Only the onions of rabi crop, which are harvested in summer season, are stored in coventional mehtods by farmers. The kharif and late kharif onions contain high percentage of moisture and are not suitable for storage. The kharif and late kharif and are not suitable for storage. The kharif and late kharif onions are sold by the farmers at the earliest in the market. The Govenrment is not maintaining any stock of onions.

Extension of Rail Line at Kumarghat-Agartala Sector

*67. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work on extension of rail line at Kumarghat-Agartala sector is proceeding as per schedule;

(b) whether sufficient budgetary provision has been made so that the work is not delayed; and

(c) whether there is a proposal to convert the metre-guage line between Lumding and Kumarghat into broad-gauge?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) Initially there were delays due to land acquisition but now the work is proceeding as per schedule.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir. The conversion of MG line from Lumbding to Badarpur is already in progress and further survey from Badarpur to Kumarghat has also been taken up.

सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की मध्यावधि समीक्षा

*68. **श्री ईशदत्त यादव:**
चौधरी हरमोहन सिंह यादव:

क्या खाद्य और उपभोक्ता मामले मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के दौरान सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की कोई मध्यावधि समीक्षा की थी;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसके क्या परिणाम निकले थे;

(ग) क्या उक्त योजनावधि के लिए निर्धारित लक्ष्य प्राप्त कर लिए गए थे;

(घ) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ङ) इस संबंध में सरकार ने क्या उपचारी उपाय किए हैं?

रसायन और उर्वरक मंत्री तथा खाद्य और उपभोक्ता मामले के मंत्री (श्री सुरजीत सिंह बरनाला): (क) और (ख) आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना (1992—97) के दौरान सरकार ने सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की कोई मध्यावधि समीक्षा नहीं की है। तथापि, पूर्व की सम्पुष्ट सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली, जिसमें 1775 चिह्नित ब्लाकों को "कवर" किया गया था, का मूल्यांकन योजना आयोग के कार्यक्रम मूल्यांकन संगठन ने किया था। मूल्यांकन से पता चला था कि यह स्कीम सामान्यतया समस्त क्षेत्रों और राज्यों की आबादी के कमजोर वर्गों के लिए लाभकारी थी। इस अध्ययन में स्कीम की कुछ त्रुटियों और बाधाओं का भी उल्लेख किया गया था।

सभी क्षेत्रों में गरीबों पर केन्द्रित लक्षित सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को जून, 1997 से लागू करने से सम्पुष्ट सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली निरर्थक हो गई थी;

(ग) से (ङ) आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के लिए कोई लक्ष्य निर्धारित नहीं किया गया था। तथापि, अतिरिक्त उचित दर दुकाने खोलने, अतिरिक्त राशन कार्ड जारी करने और अतिरिक्त गोदाम क्षमता सृजित करने/किराये पर लेने के लिए राज्यों/संघ राज्य क्षेत्रों द्वारा सम्पुष्ट सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के लिए लक्ष्यों का प्रस्ताव किया गया था। उस समय राज्य सरकारों से प्राप्त रिपोर्टों के अनुसार सामान्यतया लक्ष्य प्राप्त कर लिए गए थे।

Mass-Movement to Spread Education

*69. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the fact that even after 50 years of Independence, half of India's population is still illiterate, Government have decided to launch a mass-movement to spread education in the country;

(b) whether any comprehensive action-plan has been or is being worked out; if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) what literacy targets are proposed to be achieved before the country marches into the 21st century?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) Government has made continous efforts to achieve the goal of adult literacy since Independence. Launched in 1988, the National Literacy Mission has sought to import functional literacy to 10 crore adults in the 15—35 years age group through Total Literacy Campaigns which are implemented as a mass movement involving all segments of society. Total Literacy Campaigns have covered 7.25 crore adults in 450 districts so far. According to the National Sample Survey Organisation which has recently released the figures of the 53rd round, the literacy rate in the country at the end of 1997 was 62%. The National Agenda for Government states that Government is committed to eradication of illiteracy. Efforts in this direction are being intensified with a focus on women's literacy and greater involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The Government is also firmly committed to the goal of universalisation of elementary education within a given time-frame. Energetic actions have been initiated to achieve this task through a mission mode and through complementarity of actions between the governmental and non-governmental sectors at various levels. This is a continuing exercise with a new thrust.

Expansion of Railway Network

*70. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state: